

U.S. Department of Justice

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PRESS RELEASE

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Paul J. McNulty, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, announced that Thanh Tong, age 29, of Westminster, California, was sentenced today, by the Honorable James C. Cacheris, United States District Court Judge, for conspiracy to commit bank fraud.

Judge Cacheris sentenced Tong to 42 months incarceration, and also ordered him to pay restitution of \$93,050.00, which comprises the proceeds of the bank fraud.

On November 22, 2002, Tong pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit bank fraud and admitted that he attempted to defraud Suntrust Bank. Tong and others paid a Suntrust Bank employee to provide identity information for legitimate bank customers. Tong and the conspirators then used the identity information to manufacture false drivers licenses and credit cards. They also negotiated withdrawals in Tennessee, Georgia, and Florida from the compromised accounts using the false identification documents.

After acquiring information concerning a Suntrust Bank safe deposit box, alleged to contain jewels and precious metals, Tong and a conspirator, Tony Tan Nguyen, made arrangements to rob the box with a key provided by the Suntrust employee. Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation arrested Tong across the street from a Suntrust Bank branch in Falls Church after Nguyen entered the bank and attempted to access the safe deposit box.

The case was investigated by agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and prosecuted for the United States by Assistant United States Attorney Dana Boente.